DEMOCRATIC
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Wonderland Arithmetic at Foreign Ministers Meet

4 + 2 = 5½

GENEVA: Democratic Germany Sends First Eleven West Germany Fields Substitute Team

For the first time since the war, official delegations from the two German states were present in the conference room in the capacity of advisers when the Foreign Ministers' Conference opened in Geneva on May 11th.

Despite West German attempts to stay away from the conference, in order to prevent the presence of a delegation from Democratic Germany, the Big Four Foreign Ministers ruled that the official delegations of both German states should be invited to attend the conference with equal status in the capacity of advisers, with the right to address the conference.

From the very first minute of the conference the German Democratic Republic was represented in the conference chamber by a strong delegation headed by Foreign Minister Lothar Bolz. The West Germans, cutting off their noses to spite their faces, sent a delegation of second-rank officials. A British observer in Geneva commented: "This is no longer a Big Four Conference; but it is not a Conference of the Six, either. We had better call it the 5½ Conference." The West German newspaper "Vorwaerts", organ of the Social Democratic Party, stated: "This is the first time in history that a state has attempted to reduce to nothing its role in international affairs."

The first few days of the conference were largely occupied with questions of procedure, including the Soviet proposal that Poland and Czechoslovakia, as the two countries which had first been occupied by Hitler, and which were today threatened by West German remilitarisation, should be invited to participate. The proposal was turned down by the Western Powers, but Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko gave notice that he reserved the right to raise the question once again at a later date.

In a statement of basic aims on May 13th, the Soviet Foreign Minister urged that the conference should concentrate upon the question of the speedy conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany, and with the West Berlin problem.

On May 14th Mr. Christian Herter, US Secretary of State, tabled the western "package plan" for Germany in the name of the three Western Powers. (Details of the Western plan are given on the next page.) He claimed that this plan made considerable concessions to the Soviet point of view.

(cont. on next page)

Watch out for Phoney Scares

By the Editor

As we go to press it is too early to tell what the outcome of the Foreign Ministers' Conference in Geneva may be: but one thing is plain – there are certain forces in West Germany and elsewhere which may attempt to gum up the works if the conference seems to be producing results.

The French newspaper "Tribune des Nations" reported on May 8th that Herr Hans Globke, West German Chancellor Adenauer's personal assistant, recently suggested to French statesmen that the Berlin question should be "dramatised". The French newspaper quoted Herr Globke as saying:

"We have very valuable methods of bringing pressure to bear. Naturally Berlin will have to be used in the furtherance of our plans. This calls for careful arrangement and carefully planned action. The demonstration of May First (in West Berlin, ed.) was a success, but it was not enough. The demonstration on May 12th on the occasion of the lifting of the Berlin blockade must be utilised for spectacular events. We know that we can rely on the initiative of some American generals, and that the Air Force has always enjoyed incidents... We must dramatise the Berlin question as a reply to those in the West who would like to 'de-Berlinise' the German question. This dramatisation must be the counterpoint to Geneva, whatever it may cost..."

YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED!

(cont. from front page)

On May 15th Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko stated that he would return at a later session to the western package plan. He said that this method of presenting a whole series of complicated problems in one package could only make a solution more difficult, if not impossible.

The Soviet Foreign Minister then laid before the conference the draft for a peace treaty with Germany first published by the Soviet Union on January 10th. (Summary of the draft peace treaty is given on page 87). The conclusion of such a peace treaty with the two existing German states would make it easier to bring together and to re-unite the two German states, and would also solve the West Berlin problem, Gromyko stated.

NUTS IN MAY

"The presence of two German delegations has produced a novelty in the long history of international conferences: probably for the first time the various delegations found no name plates with the names of their countries on the tables. This solution was found when the West realised that perhaps even a name plate with the title 'German Democratic Republic' would be interpreted as unwilling recognition . . ."

("Der Tagesspiegel", West Berlin, May 12th)

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The delegations of the two German states are just three inches away from fully equal participation in the Foreign Ministers' Conference. This is the exact distance which separates the square tables at which the delegations of East and West Germany are seated from the round table seating the Big Four.

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At a press conference on May 12th a French spokesman quoted French Foreign Minister Courve de Murville as saying: "Italy played a brave part in the war." An American journalist interrupted him with the question: "On which side?"

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"The Western delegates have reached agreement on the form to be used in greeting the Pankow (Democratic German, ed.) delegates: this should be done by coolly inclining the head. The three Western Powers and the German Federal Republic cannot officially admit the existence of a government which they do not recognise, and therefore cannot greet him formally. A minimum of distant courtesy should however be paid to the Pankow delegates."

("Der Tagesspiegel", West Berlin, May 13th)

GENEVA STATEMENT BY DEMOCRATIC GERMANY'S REPRESENTATIVE

Here is the text of the declaration of principles made at the Geneva Conference on May 14th by Dr Lothar Bolz, Foreign Minister of the German Democratic Republic:

"I have the honour of addressing this conference in the name of the Government and people of the German Democratic Republic. Allow me to assure you that the overwhelming majority of the German people welcome the fact that these negotiations between East and West have come about. International tension weighs particularly heavily on the German people, and the greatest wish of our people is that Europe should have secure and lasting peace. The German people are deeply gratified that their representatives have the opportunity of speaking at this conference.

"For the first time since the end of the war in Europe, representatives of the two German states confront the foreign ministers of the powers which were attacked by German militarism and plunged into a terrible war. At the very beginning of our declaration we should like to give a solemn assurance that the aim of our entire policy is to end for all time the threat to peace posed by German militarism which is equally dangerous to the German people and to other nations.

"The nations allied in the anti-Hitler coalition made enormous sacrifices in pursuit of this goal. I should like to recall that the best sons and daughters of the German people, German anti-fascist patriots, also made great sacrifices in pursuit of the same goal. The German anti-fascists welcomed the desire of the anti-Hitler coalition, expressed in the Potsdam Declaration, to ensure peace in Europe by destroying German fascism and militarism. In the territory of the German Democratic Republic the basic principles of the Potsdam Agreement have been put into practice.

"It is no accident that nobody is able to say that the German Democratic Republic is harbouring plans for revenge, of making territorial claims, or threatening other European nations.

"The German Democratic Republic wants to devote all its strength to secure peace for the German people, and to overcome the partitioning of Germany. The question of peace is vital for the German people, and for this reason we welcomed the exchange of notes between the Big Four, and the declarations made at this conference to the effect that the aim of the conference is not to make vague declarations about the German question, but to find ways and means of solving such overdue problems as the conclusion of a peace treaty and the ending of the abnormal situation in West Berlin.

"The German people are particularly interested in the speediest conclusion of a peace treaty, since this would provide lasting peace and give Germany the unlimited right to exercise the right of self-determination. We firmly believe that the conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany would be the quickest way of ending the fateful division of Germany. A peace treaty would give both German states equal rights and equal duties, and would thus lead to a rapprochement of the two German states. A peace treaty, which would inevitably have to deal with the West Berlin question, would provide the best opportunity for solving without friction this question, which permits of no delay.

"In the course of the conference I shall be glad to utilise the opportunity of explaining in detail the constructive programme worked out by my government for the national re-birth of Germany as a united, democratic and peaceable state. This plan includes the idea of forming a confederation of the two German states. We regard negotiations between the two German states as absolutely necessary. Repeated proposals made on this subject to the Government of the German Federal Republic by the Government of the German Democratic Republic have unfortunately been fruitless.

"On the instructions of my Government I assure this assembly that it is still not too late. In this conference room delegations of the two German states sit at similar tables, and participate with equal status in the Foreign Ministers' Conference. The delegation of the German Democratic Republic is ready to discuss with the delegation of the German Federal Republic all questions of the peace treaty with Germany, as well as steps which would serve the creation of a united, democratic and peaceable German state. In this way the two German delegations could make a considerable contribution to a conference result which would be satisfactory to all sides."

WESTERN PACKAGE

Here are the main points of the Western "package plan" for the solution of the German problem, submitted to the Geneva Conference on May 14th:

1. Berlin

Free elections should be held throughout Berlin with the aim of establishing an all-Berlin administration. Occupation troops would remain in the city.

2. All-German Commission

An all-German Commission should be established to arrange technical contacts between the two German states, the free passage of persons and publications, the assurance of human rights throughout Germany, and to draft a law on all-German elections. This Commission should consist of 25 members named by the West German Government, and 10 members named by Democratic Germany.

3. All-German Elections

All-German elections should be held within thirty months, supervised by the Big Four or the UN. The elected assembly should work out a constitution, and establish an all-German government.

4. Peace Treaty

The all-German government should conclude a peace treaty with all states which were at war with Germany.

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The various stages of this western plan were coupled with proposals for the gradual reduction of armed forces in East and West, and for the establishment of a zone of limited armaments in central Europe.

DRAFT PEACE TREATY

Here are some of the main points of the draft peace treaty for Germany, originally proposed by the Soviet Government on January 10th and tabled at the Geneva Conference on May 16th:

1. Germany should be neutralised, and the two German states should leave the NATO and the Warsaw Pact.

2. Germany should be permitted limited defensive forces, but nuclear weapons, rockets and submarines would be banned.

3. The frontiers of Germany would be those of January 1st 1959, and Germany should renounce all claims to the Oder-Neisse territories, the Sudeten area, Alsace-Lorraine, and Austria.

4. Germany would guarantee all human rights, with the limitation that the Nazi Party and all similar parties, particularly parties demanding a revision of German frontiers, should be banned. All organisations directed against the allies, in particular emigrant organisations, should be banned.

5. Until the reunification of Germany, the two German states shall accept as their frontier the demarcation line existing on January 1st 1959; West Berlin should be a demilitarised Free City.

6. All foreign troops should be withdrawn from Germany within one year of the peace treaty coming into force.

Fined For Saying "Nazi Speidel"

Four British ex-servicemen were fined £5 each in London on May 12th for unfurling a banner stating "Nazi Speidel Go Home" outside the Guildhall when West German General Hans Speidel was dining there. They were found guilty of "insulting behaviour".

Mr Victor Pegram, one of the men fined, told the court: "As a disabled ex-serviceman, I felt extremely indignant and provoked at the fact that a man who was decorated by Hitler with the Knight's Cross for his faithful service should be invited to Great Britain and be an honoured guest at the Guildhall.

The magistrate, Sir Cullum Welch, stated: "We all have our feelings, but don't let yours get the better of you as they did last night."

Latin-American Visitors

Three Senators and six Representatives from the Congress of the Republic of Colombia visited the German Democratic Republic in mid-May. The group, which was invited by the Presidium of the People's Chamber, was the first official government delegation from a Latin American country ever to visit Democratic Germany.

Youth Groups Take Stand

The three most important political youth organisations in West Germany all took vigorous stands against atomic armaments at conferences and congresses held in early May.

In Karlsruhe, the 200 delegates at the Congress of the Young Socialists, an organisation akin to the Social Democratic Party in principles, voted unanimously against atomic armament and the present policies of the West German Government which prevent any relaxation of tension in Germany and Europe.

The conference of trade union youth, meeting May 9th in Kassel, also voted for action against rocket bases and atomic weapons and, with a large majority, proposed discussions, meetings and mutual visits between the trade union youth in the Federal Republic and the German Democratic Republic.

The central congress of the "Falcon" organisation of young socialists, meeting in Cologne on May 10th, voted for resolutions against rearmament in West Germany as a hindrance to German reunification, and for the Germany Plan of the Social Democratic Party. At the same time they overwhelmingly opposed the decision of the Social Democratic Parliament group urging young socialists to volunteer for the West German armed forces.

As the Falcon delegates met in Cologne, the West Berlin section of their organisation was faced with difficulties owing to their participation in the May Day demonstration with such slogans as "Reunification Without Adenauer", "Fight Atom Death" and "Freedom for Algeria". The latter slogan has caused the French commander in West Berlin to demand legal measures against the Falcons for violating "Order No. 501" which prohibits "defamation" of the Allied Occupation Forces in West Berlin.

Youth Groups Take Trip

A short trip on the Baltic Sea by steamer, fishing trawler or other vessel for all participants was one of the high points for the more than 50,000 young people from all parts of Democratic Germany who took part in the Festival of Youth held in Rostock over the Whitsuntide weekend (May 16th—18th). A varied programme of cultural and sport activities was also featured in the port city, which is a centre of youth interest because of the large new deep-sea harbour facilities being built there.

MR SHINWELL SEES FOR HIMSELF

Former British Minister in Democratic Germany

Mr Emanuel Shinwell, M. P., Minister of Defence in the British Labour Government of 1950, paid a five-day visit to the German Democratic Republic at the end of April. He was accompanied by Colonel George Wigg, M. P., who was Mr Shinwell's Parliamentary Private Secretary.

Below we reprint the text of an interview with Mr Shinwell and Mr Wigg which was broadcast by the English service of Berlin Radio on May 2nd:

Question: *Mr Shinwell, did you have the opportunity during your visit to the German Democratic Republic of informing yourself about those matters which are of interest to you, despite the shortness of your stay? So far as I am aware, you were especially interested in the People's Army.*

Mr Shinwell: Of course we were very glad to avail ourselves of the invitation extended to us, and we were primarily concerned about defence matters. Both Colonel Wigg and myself have been interested in defence matters for many years now and wanted to see something of the defence organisation in East Germany. We have seen a great deal and have been very much impressed by what we have seen. We think the training of your army, from what we saw of it, is very good and the appearance of the men indicates high quality and, so far as we understand, you have no aggressive designs, it's a purely defence organisation.

But, of course, we were interested in other matters. I was in West Germany some time ago and I thought the time had arrived, and since the invitation was extended to me, to go to East Germany; and here we are. I must say, our impression of what is going on here, the state organisation, the state shops and the approach to a socialist system of society is very impressive indeed.

Of course, we are under no illusion; you have got a great many difficulties. You have to overcome the ravages of war and a country that is building up a system of society that is adaptable to its own principles is bound to meet with obstacles. But we have to recognise the fact — and I hope it is recognised elsewhere, whatever opinions may be held about Communism and the rest of it — we have to recognise the fact that the German Democratic Republic is an accomplished fact. It is here and I imagine it is going to stay.

Colonel Wigg: When we planned our visit, we did not expect to be shown anything secret, but we wondered if we could see something of the organisation of the German Democratic Republic Army. We were received with the utmost kindness and the utmost frankness by senior military officers and it was perfectly clear from the time of our first meeting that we could see anything that we wished to see.

Yesterday we spent a whole day with a motorised unit. We were very impressed with the standard of training, with the standard of discipline which, I thought, was up to the kind of discipline that one finds in the British Army. We were also impressed by the friendly relations which exist between officers, NCOs and men. We saw them at work, on the barracks square, in the workshops and engaged in tactical operations. We were both convinced that here was a force that had been democratised. There was no trace of the old military tradition and we were also both convinced that it was organised on a defensive basis.

Question: ***Then perhaps I could ask this second question. Have either of you gentlemen met anyone here in the German Democratic Republic who tried to excuse or to extenuate the crimes of German imperialism, anyone who made any irredentist territorial claims whatsoever or who propagated feelings of hatred against the British people or any other people?***

Mr Shinwell: Well, we heard nobody either among the people in the higher ranks or among the rank and file, among the people themselves, who sought to apologise for atrocities comitted during the war or at other times or sought to belittle them. What they did was to direct attention to them and express the hope that they would never happen again. So far as they were concerned they were determined to prevent them happening again.

There was no indication, so far as we could ascertain, of aggressive designs. Everybody wanted peace; they spoke in terms of the desire for peace, of building up their own state, their own economy, of raising the standard of living — the sort of things we want to do ourselves in Great Britain, and, although there is an impression in other countries, even in Great Britain, that there are serious restrictions on personal liberty in the German Democratic Republic, we saw no sign of it, we were allowed to speak to anybody we wished.

There are variations in opinion, even in political opinion. There are various parties in the coalition and there is a good deal of criticism, one of another, except on fundamental issues which concern the primary object of the state itself and that is to build up a socialist society and, at the same time, to avoid war.

Colonel Wigg: No, I entirely agree with Mr Shinwell. We found nobody, military or civilian, who made any apologies for the happenings during the nazi regime. What we have found was a very considerable number of people who have been the victims of that regime and are determined, as far as it lies within their power, that those things should never happen again. One other thing, too, that has impressed me; there is a very real concern — whether it is true or not I do not know — but there certainly is a concern about the growth of what is regarded as nazi influence in Western Germany. Neither of us are in the position to verify this, but there is no doubt that there exists in both military and civilian circles a very real fear that just those forces which gave rise to Hitlerism are gaining strength in the Federal Republic.

Question: ***Aneurin Bevan, the foreign affairs spokesman of the Labour Party, stated during the last debate in the House of Commons that it would be a tragic mistake to imagine that British security depends upon increasing West German military strength. As you may perhaps know, the Government of the German Democratic Republic has repeatedly proposed to the West German Government a mutual limitation on the numbers of armed forces as well as the renunciation of atomic weapons. The Soviet Draft Peace Treaty takes this opinion into account. What is your opinion on this question, Mr Shinwell?***

Mr Shinwell: Well, it's not for me, without having heard Mr Bevan's speech, although I have read a text of it in one of the Monday newspapers, to comment on it except to say this — that I hold this view very strongly: that British security does not depend on building up the armed strength of Western Germany. On the other hand, I think that British security depends to a considerable extent on the strength of the Allied forces — not that I expect them to be used. I hope they never will be used. I do not think much is to be gained by taking a negative attitude on these matters; to say, you ought not to do this and not to do that; it is important to take a positive line and one positive line that I can see is, that we should work as hard as we possibly can, not through force or attempted violence or the use of military strength, but by negotiation, by conciliation, to reach a better understanding among the nations in the hope that we can reach a measure of disarmament, thus reducing expenditure on arms and promoting greater security, easing the tension in the international arena. That is the positive line. One thing I am strongly opposed to and I think this coincides with what Mr Bevan's views are, which, indeed, are the views of the Labour Party, that we must do nothing which will lead to increasing the armed strength of Western Germany by providing that country with atomic weapons.

I think it would be highly dangerous and prejudicial to the interests of peace and security in Europe if Western Germany was in possession of atomic weapons — and now, where does the German Democratic Republic come in? I can understand the German Democratic Republic building up a defence organisation. It does not appear to me to be remarkably powerful or formidable, but they are doing so in the interest of their security and I should not blame them.

As to how we are to resolve these problems is a matter which has baffled statesmen and therefore it is not for me to offer any immediate solution. I think we must go ahead steadfastly, perhaps slowly, pursuing a definitely peaceful line on all the problems that beset us — on the problem of Berlin and the problem of disengagement and the problem of the use and testing of atomic weapons. We must do that. It is a long job, there are many obstacles in the way but if there is a will to peace, in the long run, we shall succeed.

Colonel Wigg: I understand Mr Bevan's central point to be that he objects to British security depending upon the armed forces of Western Germany. On that, I entirely agree and I am very worried indeed about the growth of tension in Europe arising from the stone-walling of Dr Adenauer ...

Question: *It has become clear, from reports in the press and from other sources, that there is a certain tension, that there are certain contradictions between the Adenauer Government and the British Government. What, in your opinion, gentlemen, are the causes for the differences which exist between Great Britain and West Germany?*

Mr Shinwell: Well, it is not very clear whether there has been tension or not. Some references to this have appeared in the newspapers. It is said that there are very substantial differences between the line pursued by Mr Harold Macmillan, the Prime Minister of Great Britain, and what Dr Adenauer wants. I should think that it amounts to this; if there is any tension at all, if there is any difference of opinion, it amounts to this; that Mr Harold Macmillan has decided for very sound reasons to take the path of negotiating and even to be ready to make concessions; not substantial concessions, and indeed, if there are to be concessions, to expect concessions from the Soviet Union.

On the other hand, Mr Adenauer seems to be very obstinate, very obdurate, very rigid in his line of policy. But, of course, that sort of thing is all very well if you want trouble, if you want war, but if you want to avoid war, you have got to be ready to listen to the other nations, you have got to ask them to listen to you and you have got to try and reach an understanding. I repeat what I already said. I think the obstacles are very great — a lot of trouble in the way. The solution may be long-term but I do not think that Dr Adenauer is contributing to a solution by taking up his high and mighty attitude — and all because, as it seems to me, he resents the existence of the German Democratic Republic. He has got to recognise facts, there is no use in Dr. Adenauer putting his head in the sand and disguising the fact that the German Democratic Republic exists. And there is another thing I would like to say as Britisher — and above all things I uphold the prestige of Great Britain, my country. I want to say this — we are not going to allow Dr Adenauer or anybody else to dictate to us. We want peace and we shall pursue the path of peace and nobody is going to prevent us.

There is another thing I should like to say, because there is a lot to be said about this matter. I think the views that Colonel Wigg and I have just expressed, which are the views, generally speaking, of the Labour Party in Great Britain, are accepted by at any rate the majority of the Social Democrats in Western Germany. I think they are as anxious for peace as we are. There may be differences of opinion as between the Social Democrats in Western Germany and the various parties of the National Front in East Germany but I think that they are anxious for peace.

More Food & Consumer Goods

The first quarter of 1959 was marked by big increases in sales of high-quality foods and consumer goods in the German Democratic Republic, official statistics on the fulfillment of the economic plan showed.

The report on plan fulfillment, published on May 5th, showed that in the first three months of 1959 people in the German Democratic Republic had bought 20% more food than in the similar period of 1958. Meat purchases were up 18%, butter purchases 24%, and milk by 28%. Big reductions in the price of chocolate and cocoa led to the purchase of more than three times as much of these products as in 1958.

There were similar increases in the sales of important consumer goods: underwear sales increased 43%, and outer wear 20%. Increases in the sales of other products were: TV sets (75%), refrigerators (40%), cars (65%), shoes (60%).

Gross industrial production in the first quarter of 1959 was just under 10% higher than in 1958. (For comparison it may be noted that industrial production in Britain sank slightly in the same period). There were particularly big increases in the production of high-quality plastics, one of the fields in which Democratic Germany is now concentrating its efforts. The report on plan fulfillment noted, however, that the export programme was still lagging in some branches, particularly in shipbuilding and machine tools. The programme for standardisation in industry had also failed to reach its target.

Immigrants to Democratic Germany

By Harald Thiemann

(Every month over 6000 people move from West Germany to the German Democratic Republic. This article, condensed from the East Berlin weekly "Wochenpost", tells something of their motives and how they are getting on.)

Gerhard Arnold, who is now 23 years old, has been living in Saalfeld for three years. He told me in a few short sentences about his life.

"My father was killed in the war and my mother died during the first post-war years. After finishing my apprenticeship in Mannheim (West Germany), I became a carpet salesman. I took home only 160 marks a month.

"One day an acquaintance told me that things were not so bad in the East and that they even had "Youth Shops" run by young people. I had nothing to lose in Mannheim except the 160 marks take-home pay, which hardly kept my head above water, so I came here.

"I soon understood", he continued, "that the German Democratic Republic is really a land of boundless opportunity. After a little more than a year, I was put in charge of a store. In Mannheim, I would have been conscripted into the West German Army, here I became an 'activist'. Last year I even earned a special trip to the Soviet Union. I was present for the anniversary celebrations of the revolution in Moscow. I have to laugh at the very idea of anyone ever having sent me as a Mannheim carpet salesman to visit New York."

He then showed me through "his" store on the central square of the town. I was surprised at the large assortment of rugs, carpets and curtains. I had been searching for a certain kind of anthracite-coloured woven rug for months in Berlin. Here, in this friendly little small-town store, I found three of them. Herr Arnold was certain that his assortment would stand comparison with any West German carpet store. The sales could not be compared, though, he believed. They were much higher here.

"Where are really the 'conflicts' in such a case, after all?" I asked myself after leaving him. A young man, drawn at first only by economic advantages here, soon came to understand the logic of socialist construction here in our republic; he used his initiative in every way to make life a little pleasanter for the neighbours who had now become his fellow-citizens in the German Democratic Republic. This new citizenship, in fact, had now come to be an accepted fact for him, indeed, the only solution possible for him in present-day Germany.

* * *

Fritz Partschefeld, an experienced old craftman, used to live in a nicely-decorated 3-room flat in Heidenheim near Stuttgart (West Germany) with his wife and his young son. He earned good wages as a foreman. They were by no means wealthy — the West German "economic miracle" was the same fairy tale for them that it was for so many other people; but the Partschefeld family was in no economic difficulties.

Fritz Partschefeld is a very alert person. When I visited him in Jena — he returned to his home town six months ago — he told me of the great anxiety which he had felt during the last few years. "I didn't want to share again such a terrible responsibility and guilt", he told me.

The nazi period had taught the experienced Zeiss optical worker how wars are prepared for. And now, again, he saw how they began to produce parts for military range-finders, submarine and tank periscopes in the optical plant in Stuttgart-Oberkochen where he worked. And gradually all the old nazi directors who had disappeared after 1945 emerged once more. Once in a plant meeting one of the trade union leaders was shouted down by one of these incorrigibles. It was the factory doctor, a former SS man, who yelled: "String him up". At the Christmas celebration the nazi Horst Wessel Lied was even sung.

Fritz Partschefeld tried to warn people — people didn't want to listen. "I am no Communist," he told me. "You don't have to be a Communist to hate the nazis."

And something else influenced him to decide on his return to Jena. "Things are going downhill over there in West Germany. When the workers proposed that the company sell its products at a lower price, however, the manager answered, 'We wouldn't consider it, I'd rather halt production.' And then came the sack for many of the workers, with the explanation that there was no work to be done because the market situation was unfavourable."

Partschefeld, who has now become a technician, published several articles in the little factory newspaper of his new factory, the nationally-owned Carl Zeiss plant in Jena. A few copies landed back in the Zeiss factory in West Germany where he used to work and the articles caused lots of heated discussion in both West and East. Some of his new shop-mates in Jena wouldn't believe that the military machine is on the move again in West Germany. And a fascist in Stuttgart printed a rebuttal to the article in leaflets sponsored by the neo-nazi "People's Union for Peace and Freedom". Fritz Partschefeld was not at all disturbed at this response to his articles. and hopes that some people may have learned a little from them. Perhaps these discussions and arguments were the best way for him to find his real place here with us.

* * *

Five years ago the skilled mechanic Herbert Ahrenbach left the German Democratic Republic. He has been back here for a year now. His conclusion is, "Four lost years — I could really weep over them."

His wife told me about the Ludwigshafen "Refuge" Camp where they were forced to wait for three years. It was an old school. There were six families in every room, separated by curtains. Her husband earned 360 marks a month. Perhaps that would have been enough to get along on if the two children hadn't been born. "In all the four years," Gisela Ahrenbach told me, "we ate perhaps five or six pounds of butter. Otherwise only margarine."

Then the Ahrenbachs finally got a two-room flat. They were very happy, but their difficulties were by no means over. A flat requires furniture, a cupboard needs chinaware, a bedroom needs beds and, of course, groceries are always needed. The financial strength of the little family was overtaxed. They struggled from one day to the other, constantly worried about paying the next instalment.

One day as the young couple were talking together, one of them uttered a word which till then no one had dared to mention — return.

When they had crossed the border and reached Eisenach, the first thing that happened was that they were given a big meal. The feeling of shame was their first main impression. Then they arrived at an agricultural production copperative in Mechow — the people there were

at first somewhat suspicious. They wondered if the Ahrenbachs had learned from the past years. And would they get accustomed to an agricultural life? But then they got over their questions and started to help the family.

The Ahrenbach flat is not yet exactly a model home in its furnishings. But things are getting better, they always have enough to eat, they are raising a cow, 24 chickens and two pigs. With honest work they are finding it possible to buy one thing after another. Not far away lives the secretary of the local group of the Socialist Unity Party, who has been especially helpful with advice and support.

Most important, they have found some sense of perspective in their lives. I asked Herbert Ahrenbach what he would have done if he had received his own piece of land. "I would have joined the cooperative anyway," he answered without hesitating.

Reuters in East Berlin

Reuters, the British news agency, opened an office in East Berlin May 13th, thus becoming the first Western news agency to appoint a full-time correspondent in Democratic Germany. Peter B. Johnson of Reuters has been officially accredited as foreign correspondent by the government of the German Democratic Republic.

Trade Office in London

Trade between Britain and Democratic Germany will be furthered by a company now established in London by Democratic Germany's Chamber of Foreign Trade. The company, which will be called "K. F. A. Ltd." and directed by Kurt Wolf, hitherto Vice-President of the Chamber, is a result of the trade agreement signed in January between the Federation of British Industries and the Chamber of Foreign Trade. "K. F. A." is the abbreviation of "Kammer fuer Aussenhandel", the name of the Chamber in German.

Delegation to Wales

An official delegation from the German Democratic Republic arrived in Wales on May 7th on the invitation of of the Council of Wales. The delegation, which was headed by Wilhelm Koenen, veteran Socialist parliamentarian, was mainly composed of members of the Domowina, the organisation of the Sorbs, a Slav national minority in Democratic Germany.

"Anti-Semitism Driving Jew Out" — United Press Report

The American news agency United Press International reported on May 6th what West German anti-Semitism looks like in one small West German town. Here is the story, as reported by UPI from Frankfurt:

"An anti-Jewish hate campaign in the nearby town of Koeppern has cost Kurt Sumpf his life savings and his means of living.

"Mr Sumpf, 33, a Jew, settled in Koeppern in August 1958, with his wife and nine-year-old son, Peter. With $2,500 he had saved and another $ 2,500 from the Jewish Restitution Board he bought a restaurant in the town.

"Now, after investing all his money in the café, Mr Sumpf and his family have succumbed to an anti-Semitic campaign which saw his restaurant nearly wrecked, his son tormented and his wife refused service when shopping.

"Police charged 12 men on Jan. 27th with heading the campaign. The case has not yet come to court.

"Mr Sumpf told police the windows of his café had been repeatedly smashed, crockery and glasses thrown against the walls, his wife punched in the face and his son so tormented by other children that he had to be taken away from school ..."

(Full details of the case of Mr Sumpf, and of dozens of other cases of anti-Semitism in West Germany today can be found in the pamphlet "Witch Hunt Against Jews" published recently in East Berlin. For details of how to get this and other pamphlets, see below.)

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BERLIN NOTEBOOK

By John Peet

West German spokesmen in the African and Asian countries often make great play with the fact that West Germany has no colonies, naturally failing to mention that Germany's pre-1914 colonial record was second to none in brutality.

So it may be a good thing to place on record a few observations made by the West German Food Minister, Dr Heinrich Luebke, at a press conference in Johannesburg in the Union of South Africa on March 16th. I quote the following particulars from the official press service of the West German Social Democratic Party:

"On April 8th Dr Luebke ... in reply to a parliamentary question, denied that he had praised the racial policy of the South African Government. Associated Press has now followed the matter up, and received the following information from its representative in Johannesburg:

Herr Luebke was asked by the correspondent of UPI what he thought about the racial problem here in South Africa. His answer, noted by me in shorthand, was as follows: 'South Africa has had great experience in dealing with native problems. Experience of this sort would be valuable for other countries of the African continent, countries which have the same problem which they have not yet solved. Much good could be done by an exchange of experts on this question. The native problem here is in good hands. In other parts of the continent they have not yet made good use of the South African experience in this field'."

I need hardly add any comment, but I should perhaps stress that the Government of the German Democratic Republic, far from sharing Herr Luebke's views, has done and is doing all in its power to help the national liberation movement in Africa and Asia.

* * *

In the past I have often had occasion to criticise the BBC for its treatment of East Germany and its problems: today, to the surprise of everyone, including myself, I want to criticise the august Corporation for presenting too rosy a view of at least one aspect of life in the German Democratic Republic. The General Overseas Service of the BBC transmitted a talk by Anthony Rhodes sometime in the middle of April entitled "Do the East Germans Want Reunification?", and this talk was reprinted in "The Listener" on April 23rd. The sentence I want to criticise reads as follows: "Even American statisticians, who delight in measuring economy in terms of motor-cars, have produced the surprising information that, while there are fourteen cars to every thousand people in West Germany, there are as many as nine to every thousand in East Germany."

Now this is, unfortunately, nonsense. I don't know what these anonymous American statisticians were up to, but their electronic brain must have been shorting badly when it came up with these figures. Just for a start, there are not 14 cars per thousand in West Germany, but 47 cars. I don't know what the real figures for East Germany are, and the otherwise valuable Statistical Yearbook of the Democratic Republic does not tell me, but anyone with half an eye can see that the number of private cars on the road in East Germany today is only a fraction of the number on the roads in West Germany.

There are plenty of reasons for this state of affairs, which is being put right as quickly as possible: main reason is the simple fact that when Germany was partitioned almost all the big car factories happened to be in the western half, and it takes time to build a whole new industry from the ground up. Another contributory reason has been the general shortage of steel here (also a result of the arbitrary division of Germany) and although very successful light cars with plastic bodies are now being turned out, even such cars still need an awful lot of steel.

But this disparity in the number of cars only points up the fact that in nearly all other fields there is today really very little to choose between the two halves of Germany with regard to the standard of living. Per head consumption of the main foodstuffs is almost equal in both halves of the country, (with the German Democratic Republic leading by a head with regard to butter) and in the field of clothing, which was a bit of a Cinderella here for a time, there is every prospect of the gap closing soon.

But let us get back to this BBC talk which I started out to criticise. Having got the criticism off my chest, let me go on to say that the talk as a whole was a refreshing change from a lot of the nonsense often dished up. Here are a few sentences which may be of interest:

"... the memory of Hitler is much more alive in East than in West Germany. It may be argued that it is kept alive artificially by the Communists; but there is no doubt that here the people are more ashamed than their countrymen in the West of the Nazi interlude; they have accepted their responsibility for it, their responsibility as Germans, and they do not try to gloss over it in the way I have noticed in West Germany.

"It is generally assumed in the West that East Germany is a place of poverty and misery, compared with the glamorous land governed by Bonn. The fact is that, although the East German official claim that they will have achieved the same standard of living as West Germany by the end of 1961 is exaggerated, the general standard of living is much higher today than one would expect of a land which, in 1945, had been completely devastated by the war. The East Germans have developed an extensive set of social services, health, child welfare, and old age pensions on a scale at least as elaborate as the British one. A large building and housing programme is being carried out all over the country. The price of such essentials as rents and basic foods is low; in many small restaurants all over the country I ate good meals at reasonable prices (assessing prices not on rates of exchange but in terms of a worker's earning capacity)."

With all of which I would agree, barring Mr Rhodes scepticism about catching up with West Germany by 1961. But this is a matter of the future, and I hope that Mr Rhodes comes back in 1961 to take a look.

* * *

We are sorry to have to trot out the old saw about truth being stranger than fiction, but it has proved so again. Recently in this column we related the anecdote about the Berlin smuggler who solemnly bicycled past the customs guards on the East-West border in Berlin with a rucksack full of sand: he was smuggling bicycles.

On May 5th a West Berlin court jailed a man for seven months for precisely this trick. For months he had driven a horse and an empty cart almost daily past the customs officials. Nobody took any notice of him, because the cart was empty: he was smuggling horses. And what happened to the horses in oh-so-prosperous West Berlin? They tell me that the sausages in many shops there broke into a canter if you said "gee-up".

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